Volume 9, Issue 45   Atari Online News, Etc.   November 9, 2007

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A-ONE #0945   11/09/07

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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
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Well, we're pulling out the extra blankets up here in the Northeast this
week. It's been downright cold around here lately; and we've experienced
a few hard frosts the past few days. However, we're looking to see some
warmer temperatures next week. If I'm lucky, I might get in one or two
more rounds of golf before the course closes. That would be nice.

We've started our annual fall clean-up, and attacking those falling
leaves. We've cleaned up the yard twice already, and will likely head
out again this weekend if the weather manages to hold. So far it hasn't
been too bad, as long as I manage to keep up with it.

This week, I've done something that I've never done before. As I stated
last week, my seasonal job at the golf course has ended with the usual
lay off. I convinced myself to file for unemployment benefits, and was
finally able to do so this week. After a number of bouts with lengthy
voice mail hell, and waiting on the phone, I got it done. It was always
my philosophical belief not to take money if I didn't earn it; and it was
a tough decision to make. But, I've been convinced that I've earned the
right to collect. It will likely be a very small amount, but it will be
something to help the household. Heating oil and gasoline prices aren't
going down anytime soon! So, we'll see what happens. Meanwhile, I'll
start to hit the want ads again shortly. So much for retirement again!

Until next time...

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                        PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                      compiled by Joe Mirando
                        joe@atarinews.org

[Editor's Note: Due to the relatively limited number of messages in the
Atari Newsgroups this past week, there will be no People Are Talking
column this week.]

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->In This Week's Gaming Section  - Target Pulls 'Manhunt 2'!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""     "Call of Duty" Is 'Modern'
                                     Atari 2600 Enters Hall!
                                     And more!



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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
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Target Pulls Violent Video Game

Target Corp. said Wednesday it has pulled the "Manhunt 2" video game from
its stores due to particularly gruesome content that can be unlocked by
hackers.

In "Manhunt 2," by Rockstar Games, two prisoners go on a bloody rampage
after escaping from a secret asylum for the criminally insane. Players
take the escapees' point of view.

The game is rated "mature" by the Entertainment Software Rating Board,
whose ratings cover a series of levels from "early childhood" through
"adults only." The original version of "Manhunt 2" was gruesome enough
to earn an "adults only" rating so Rockstar blurred out some of the nasty
bits and got the rating lowered to "mature" before it went on sale on
Halloween.

Like many retailers, Target sells video games and software rated
"mature," which are deemed suitable for players ages 17 and older, but
doesn't stock "adults only" games.

"Target strives to provide merchandise that will appeal to a wide variety
of guests," the Minneapolis-based retailer said in a prepared statement.
"We also want guests to be comfortable with the purchasing decisions they
make at Target."

It took hackers about 24 hours to figure out how to un-blur the imagery
on the version of the game for PlayStation Portables, though only on PSPs
that have been illegally modified.

Officials with Rockstar Games did not immediately return messages seeking
comment Wednesday about Target's decision.

Two years ago, after hackers found a hidden sex scene in "Grand Theft
Auto: San Andreas," the ratings board slapped an "adults only" rating on
it.

Ratings board President Patricia Vance said the board is standing behind
"Manhunt 2's" "mature" rating, noting the difficulty of unlocking the
offending content.

"Call of Duty" Casts Players In Modern Combat

The sniper crouches down in the tall grass, then pauses using his scope to draw a bead on an enemy soldier, who staggers back in a spray of blood.

It is easy to mistake the scene for footage from a war movie but it is actually from "Call of Duty 4: Modern Combat," a new video game that is storming its way onto the wish-lists of many armchair soldiers this holiday season.

"Call of Duty 4" casts players in the role of various elite warriors such as U.S. Marines or British SAS in missions that jump around the world and even in time.

It's a departure for the series which has produced three popular World War Two-era games.

Expectations are high in part because the game was made by Infinity Ward, a highly regarded studio that was founded by the folks behind "Medal of Honor," widely held to be the seminal World War Two shooting game.

"We're all huge fans of World War Two and there are still a lot of stories to be told in a World War Two setting but I think we really need to prove to the public that 'Call of Duty' is not just a World War Two franchise. It's a war-based shooter and there are wars at all times," Infinity Ward founder Grant Collier said in an interview.

"There were a lot of doubters when we first announced the game ... none of those people have those concerns any more."

The simExchange, an online prediction market for video game sales, expects "Call of Duty 4" to sell 1.3 million copies this November and December just for Microsoft's Xbox 360, with total sales for all versions to eventually top 6.5 million copies.

It's all adding up to another breakout hit for Infinity Ward parent Activision, which has been on a roll this year thanks to games like "Guitar Hero 2."

The game stands to benefit from stumbling by competitors. When Take-Two delayed its sure-fire blockbuster "Grand Theft Auto IV" from its planned October release date to next year, analysts immediately pointed to "Call of Duty 4" as the biggest beneficiary.

The game aims to be THE military action title of its time, supplanting popular but aging shooter staples such as EA's "Battlefield 2" and Ubisoft's "Rainbow 6."

"Is there a threat from any other game this holiday season that could hurt 'Call of Duty' sales? No. 'Call of Duty' is the threat to other games' sales," said simExchange analyst Jesse Divnich.

There is some grumbling among fans that the single-player campaign can run as short as four or five hours on the easiest settings, but where the game

is really expected to shine is in its online multiplayer.

Players will be kept busy teasing out the intricacies of an in-depth weapons upgrade system and menu of "perks" that bestow special abilities such as moving silently or bullets that pack extra punching power.

As with most military games, realism was a priority.

"Graphically, the goal was to be most photo-realistic game ever made. We created the first next-gen title ever with 'Call of Duty 2'. That was back when all these art techniques were in their infancy. With 'Call of Duty 2' under their belt, these guys have really mastered them," Collier said.

Developers visited military bases and tagged along for live-fire exercises, and the very people the game portrays are some of the game's biggest fans.

"Talking to World War Two vets, the ones that are still around, they don't play video games and don't really care. But these guys are hot to trot for video games," Collier said of the Marines.

"Call of Duty 4" was released on November 6 for the Xbox 360, Sony PlayStation 3 and Windows-based computers.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
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                        Jack Tramiel Update

Last week I received a call from Karen Tucker, who is organizing the December 10th appearance of Jack Tramiel at the Computer History Museum in California. The event will include key people from Apple, IBM, and Amiga (see below). When writing the book "On the Edge: the Spectacular Rise and Fall of Commodore" I tried getting an interview with Jack by calling him almost a dozen times, writing several letters to him, and getting his son Leonard to convince him - everything short of showing up at his ranch and demanding an interview. I'm in awe that Karen has been able to make this happen. Apparently she and Leonard convinced Jack that it was important for him to talk about his experiences before it was too late.

Karen wanted me to pass on some information. Basically Jack is done with the confrontational period of his life where he had to be hard nosed in order to run a company in a cutthroat industry. He's now a retired grandfather who spends most of his time traveling with his family. Karen wants Jack to feel welcome, where everyone in the audience can listen to his history with an open mind. Hopefully if he feels welcome at the museum he will participate in other events and we can eventually piece together his experiences in the early computer industry. Karen knows that most people will be receptive to Jack, but she was a little worried that

a few might decide to throw his kind gesture back in his face by
confronting him. If you know of anyone who plans to do this, please
discourage them from attending.

From what I could gather, this is in celebration of the 25th anniversary
of the C64. There will first be a one-on-one interview with Jack
moderated by John Markoff of the NY Times. After that, Steve Wozniak
(Apple II), Bill Lowe (IBM PC) and Adam Chawniac (Amiga) will take to the
stage for more discussion. The discussions will probably focus on
Commodore, though it's possible his Atari history will be included.
Everyone is welcome and if you aren't in the area there will be a video
webcast of the event available on their website. This promises to be a
great event, and I hope to see you there!

More information should be available soon at:
http://www.computerhistory.org/events/

All the best,

Brian Bagnall

Atari 2600, Raggedy Andy, Kite Enshrined

To celebrate the toys inducted Thursday in the National Toy Hall of Fame,
hug a red-haired doll, grab a single-button joystick or go fly a kite.

Raggedy Andy, the Atari 2600 video game system and the kite were chosen
for entry into the Strong National Museum of Play's all-star lineup,
joining the bicycle, Lionel model trains, Mr. Potato Head and 33 other
classic playthings.

"They are outstanding toys that have engaged multiple generations over
time, inspiring them to create, learn, discover," said the Rochester
museum's president, G. Rollie Adams.

In 1977, Atari converted a television set, for good or bad, into a toy.
While it wasn't the first home video game system, it popularized the
fledging electronic games genre with its bright colors, catchy music and
pop-in cartridge versions of arcade favorites such as Pac-Man, Frogger
and Space Invaders.

"It may look primitive compared to the advanced video game systems
available today, but it helped make these possible," said the museum's
curator, Patricia Hogan.

The game system is the most recently invented member of the hall. The
kite, believed to have originated in China almost 3,000 years ago, is
among the oldest.

Kites remain a universal favorite, with some cultures in Asia and the
Middle East turning kite contests into a national pastime.

While its uses have extended to warfare, aerial photography, meteorology
and experiments in electricity, the kite endures for its capacity to
exercise a handler's agility, endurance and knowledge of scientific
principles, Hogan said.

At its heart, however, "a kite needs only a bit of breeze, a wide open field and a kid who wants to play," she said. "And nothing sends the human spirit soaring so well as a colorful kite aloft."

The kindly rag doll character Raggedy Andy follows his sister, Raggedy Ann, into the hall.

"It really seemed like the two of them should be one unit together," said Christopher Bensch, the museum's vice president for collections.

Raggedy Ann, inducted in 2002, was created in 1918 in a children's book series by illustrator and author Johnny Gruelle, and her brother was introduced two years later. They come to life when humans aren't looking and embark on stirring adventures, and have been featured through the years in stories, poems, cartoons and greeting cards.

Strong acquired the five-year-old National Toy Hall of Fame from A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village in Salem, Ore., in 2002. The toys enshrined so far range from Barbie to Jack-in-the-Box, Legos to Lincoln Logs, Slinky to Play-Doh and Crayola crayons to marbles.

On the Net:

http://www.museumofplay.com

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                        A-ONE's Headline News
                  The Latest in Computer Technology News
                       Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

              Nonprofit Group Starts Making Low-Cost Laptops

A nonprofit group said on Tuesday production of a new laptop computer for children in developing countries had begun, a milestone that could shake up the PC industry by ushering in a new era of low-cost computing.

The One Laptop per Child Foundation, started in 2005 by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Nicholas Negroponte, said Taiwan's Quanta Computer had started mass production of its first product, the lime-green-and-white XO laptop computer, at a factory in Changshu, China.

The group has already announced orders for children in Uruguay and Mongolia. It also plans to offer the laptops to Americans and Canadians through a $399 holiday charity program that covers the cost of providing a second machine to a child overseas.

The device, which runs on free Linux software, has already had a significant impact on the industry.

Negroponte has traveled the globe meeting world leaders and talking to the public about speeding introduction of computers to children in the developing world. The XO is designed for elementary school students who

are given the machines to take to and from school, like textbooks.

Analysts say the publicity he generated, along with concern his foundation's laptop might take business from commercial products, prompted companies, including chipmaker Intel Corp and software maker Microsoft Corp, to boost investment in developing countries.

It has also spurred the launch of a new class of low-cost computers for a market broader than school children.

Intel has developed the Classmate PC for the education market in developing countries, a laptop that it says costs $200 to build. So far its biggest customer is Pakistan's Allama Iqbal Open University, which ordered 700,000 of them.

Taiwan's Asustek Computer Inc recently introduced a line of notebook computers, the Eee PCs, that retail for as little as $245 in some countries and are targeted at children and women.

On Friday, Wal-Mart Stores Inc offered a limited number of laptops from Acer Inc for $348. It is possible that Wal-Mart might repeat the promotion or that other retailers will offer similar deals during the holiday shopping season.

EA Donates SimCity to OLPC Laptops

With the launch of a limited-time "Give 1, Get 1" sales effort for the groundbreaking XO computer slated for Monday, Electronic Arts added to the momentum behind the green machine by announcing it is donating the original SimCity game to the One Laptop Per Child project.

"By gifting SimCity onto each OLPC laptop, EA is providing users with an entertaining way to engage with computers as well as help develop decision-making skills while honing creativity," the company said in a statement.

It's the first donation of a game to the effort.

"SimCity is entertainment that's unintentionally educational. Players learn to use limited resources to build and customize their cities. There are choices and consequences, but in the end, it's a creativity tool that's only limited by the player's imagination," said Steve Seabolt, vice president of global brand development, The Sims Label.

"The game should prove to be an incredibly effective way of making the laptop relevant, engaging, and fun, particularly for first time players. We are thrilled to be making this contribution to OLPC to help meet their goal of educating the children of the world."

The donation comes on the heels of several partnerships with OLPC, including T-Mobile's donation of a year of free hotspot use for XO owners and Hosting.com's donation of an XO machine for every server it sells in November and December.

OLPCNews editor Wayan Vota called the donation of SimCity "another great achievement of Nicholas Negroponte's dream."

Negroponte started the OLPC project in 2005 with the idea that developing countries would buy millions of the machines to distribute to children. That vision has not panned out as OLPC has only received one solid commitment to buy, from Uruguay. That has led Negroponte to switch largely to a philanthropic model.

Give 1, Get 1 (G1G1) is the first initiative under that model and it has a certain sector of technophiles fired up to get their hands on one. The program runs from November 12 to 26 and allows consumers in the U.S. and Canada to buy two machines, one to keep, one to donate to a child in the developing world.

Vota faults OLPC for limiting the G1G1 program to North America. "This has more to do with logistics, support, and other bureaucratic reasons that apply to international commerce of electronic equipment and not an arbitrary decision that forgot or ignored the rest of the world," an OLPC representative said on the project's Wiki.

But Vota said he wonders why OLPC can't just use a transatlantic courier to deliver the machines. Whatever the cost could be tacked on for purposes of the G1G1 program.

Vota has proposed a way for consumers outside of North America to route around OLPC's policy. They can simply set up a mail forwarding account so they can order the machines sent to a U.S. address and then have them shipped anywhere in the world. Vota has set up such an arrangement himself at a UPS store in Washington D.C.

Click A Mouse, Feed A Mouth In U.N. Campaign

A food-linked word game put on the Internet a month ago has proved a runaway success and has already generated enough rice to feed 50,000 people, the United Nations World Food Programme said on Friday.

FreeRice offers participants multiple choice definitions to the meaning of a word, with each correct click generating 10 grains of rice for the WFP.

The brainchild of American online fundraising pioneer John Breen, the Web site (www.freerice.com) relies on advertising revenue to underwrite its rice campaign.

"FreeRice really hits home how the Web can be harnessed to raise awareness and funds for the world's number one emergency," said Josette Sheeran, executive director of the Rome-based WFP.

"The site is a viral marketing success story with more than one billion grains of rice donated in just one month to help tackle hunger worldwide," she added.

The day it was launched on October 7 just 830 grains of rice were donated.

But the Internet community quickly caught on, and on November 8 alone 77 million grains were donated - equivalent to more than seven million correct clicks.

Ultra-Fast Internet Networks Won't Merge

The on-again, off-again talks to merge two ultra-fast nonprofit Internet networks have ended again - for good this time, it appears.

Internet2 and National LambdaRail serve many of the nation's universities and research institutions by offering fast Internet connections that physicists, astronomers and other researchers need to exchange large amounts of data.

The two next-generation networks began with separate missions, but their technologies and services converged over the years. And Jeff Lehman, chairman of Internet2's board, said their clients backed the merger because the organizations largely served the same community.

Talks resumed this year, and a committee with top leaders from each network worked out a compromise in August.

Internet2's board approved it, despite misgivings by some of its board members, but LambdaRail's board sought more concessions. And last week, both sides called it quits.

"A lot of us are disappointed," said Internet2's Lehman, a member of the merger committee. "We knew it was a challenge, and we were hopeful that we would find a way to get to the end this time."

Many LambdaRail participants felt they had invested in the system and wanted greater returns, Lehman said. He said Internet2 offered as much financial benefits as it could.

LambdaRail Chairman Erv Blythe, in a statement, described his organization as an atypical nonprofit, one that tracked how much individual members gave and received. He said LambdaRail needed additional concessions to satisfy its obligations to contributing members.

"Under the circumstances, we agree that our respective organizations have no choice but to move forward independently," Lehman and Blythe said in a joint statement.

Microsoft Kills Mac IM, Updates Office For Mac

Microsoft is going to kill off MSN Messenger for Mac and replace the IM software with a new product. The company last night also released its latest software update for Office 2004 for Mac.

Microsoft revealed its IM plans during a presentation at the Georgia Institute of Technology's IEEE Student Branch. The company plans to ditch its existing IM solution for Mac in order to develop and deliver a more advanced client.

While details are scarce at present, the new Mac software is expected to appear by the end of next year and will support AIM, Google Talk, and ICQ and be compatible with Windows Live Messenger 9.0.

The Microsoft Office 2004 for Mac 11.3.9 update fixes an issue that

causes Word 2004 to quit unexpectedly when users print a document.

Microsoft notes that this update is recommended for Office 2004 Standard Edition, Office 2004 Student and Teacher Edition, Office 2004 Professional Edition, Word 2004. The update weighs in as a 2.49MB download.

Salesforce.com Falls For Phishing Scam, Warns Customers

Salesforce.com is warning customers that they may be the targets of malicious software or phishing scams after one of its employees was tricked into divulging a corporate password.

In a note to customers, Salesforce said that online criminals have been sending customers fake invoices and, starting just a few days ago, viruses and key logging software. The e-mails were sent using information that was illegally obtained from Salesforce.com.

Salesforce.com bills its Web-based CRM products as easier to use and maintain than traditional CRM software, but this latest development underlines the security risks that come with this more open model.

The problems began a few months ago when a Salesforce.com employee fell for a phishing scam and divulged a company password that gave attackers access to a customer contact list. With this password, the criminals were able to obtain first and last names, company names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of Salesforce.com customers.

"As a result of this, a small number of our customers began receiving bogus e-mails that looked like Salesforce.com invoices," Salesforce.com said.

Some of those customers then fell victim to the scam and gave up their passwords to the criminals, too. When Salesforce.com started seeing malicious software being attached to these e-mails, the company decided to issue a general alert to its nearly 1 million subscribers.

According to the Washington Post, Suntrust Banks was one of the customers victimized by this scam.

Salesforce.com is working with law enforcement to resolve the problem, but in the meantime, it is recommending that customers implement a number of security measures in order to cut down on the phisher's chance of succeeding.

Suggested actions include restricting Salesforce.com account access to users who are within the corporate network, phishing education or the use of stronger authentication techniques to log on to the Salesforce.com servers.

On Tuesday, Salesforce.com declined to comment further on the matter. "Everything that they have to say about it is in this note," a spokesman with the company's public-relations agency said.

Microsoft Stands By Its Invite to Arrested Hacker

Microsoft's security team took a bit of a chance a few weeks ago, when it invited Roberto Preatoni to give a talk at its Redmond campus.

Preatoni is the founder of Wabisabilabi, a Switzerland-based company that bills itself as an auction site for the software bugs that companies like Microsoft never want anybody to see. He spoke at Microsoft in late September as an invited guest at Microsoft's semi-annual Blue Hat security conference.

But what had been an edgy invite by Microsoft's Blue Hat planners took on a new dimension this week, when Preatoni was arrested in Milan on charges relating to a national spying scandal at Telecom Italia, Italy's largest telephone carrier.

Preatoni's company confirmed his arrest in a statement Thursday, saying that his work for Telecom Italia was unrelated to Wabisabilabi (the incidents at Telecom Italia took place before Wabisabilabi was founded) and that the company was "confident that his innocence will be established if a case ever comes to court."

The charismatic Preatoni was a popular speaker at security conferences but his company's controversial business model raised some eyebrows.

So was it a miscalculation to invite him to Blue Hat? Not at all, said George Stathakopoulos, general manager of Microsoft's Response and Product Centers "Look, if you think of Blue Hat as being [for] someone who comes to work with us, that's a mistake," he said. "We brought HD Moore in."

Moore, no fan of Microsoft, is the is the author of the open-source Metasploit hacking tool and he has written code that exploits dozens, if not hundreds, of critical vulnerabilities in Microsoft's products.

According to Stathakopoulos, the whole point of the Blue Hat conference is to bring in new voices that will challenge Microsoft developers.

"If you bring this guy in and he talks to your development force, he says I am buying vulnerabilities against your products and they have value. Make your products better because I am your enemy," he said. "So the fact that he got arrested, I'm not happy about it because I thought he was a good guy. But what do I know?"

But not everybody reacted positively to Preatoni's talk. "Some people say god I hate this guy; people say 'why did you bring him over here?'" Stathakopoulos said. "But when people internalize it and step back and they think about it a little they think, 'I've got a lot of work to do.'"

NJ Man Gets Two Years Jail For AOL Spam Scam

A New Jersey man was sentenced to more than two years in prison on Friday for helping send "spam" e-mails to more than 1.2 million America Online subscribers.

Todd Moeller, 28, was sentenced 27 months in prison in a federal court in New York after he was caught making a deal with a government informant to send junk e-mails - known as spam - advertising a computer security

program in return for 50 percent of the profits, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan said.

Moeller and Adam Vitale of New York pleaded guilty earlier this year to breaking anti-spam laws and defeating AOL's filter system by using a variety of computer servers and changing the header information on e-mails to ensure they could not be traced, court papers said.

Moeller told the informant via instant messaging he could conceal the source of the e-mails through his access to 40 different servers and had profited $40,000 a month from other spam e-mail scams that promoted stocks, prosecutors said.

In one week in August 2005 Moeller and Vitale sent e-mails on behalf of the informant to more than 1.27 million addresses of subscribers at AOL, the online division of Time Warner Inc.

Vitale will be sentenced November 13.

Major Russian Malware Site Goes Offline

One of the Internet's most notorious malware and software exploit hubs, the Russian Business Network, has suddenly gone offline.

Trend Micro reports that Internet domains associated with the network went down at 7 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on Tuesday, Nov. 6, taking with it a network provider accused of hosting some of the worst criminal activities the Internet has to offer, including various high-profile software exploits, voracious Trojan malware, and even hosting sites used for child porn.

"That RBN, currently, has no Internet connectivity means that the Web is a somewhat safer place today. Unfortunately, this may not be for long. RBN may find new upstream providers," suggests the Trend blog.

It is not clear precisely what has caused the downing of the RBN, but Trend speculates that some problem with an upstream ISP might be to blame.

The Washington Post times the downing as having happened on Nov. 4, and states that the RBN has been in trouble since the newspaper publicised its activities in October causing upstream providers Tiscali.uk and the Russia's C41 to drop it.

The RBN is significant enough to have spawned numerous articles detailing its activities, an extensive entry on Wikipedia, and a number of sites dedicated to documenting its alleged nastiness. Recent malware events it has been blamed for include October's Adobe PDF exploit, and the hacking of the Bank of India in September.

One RBN watch-blog claims it was behind 40 of 57 fake anti-malware software products came from it.

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